

Message Text

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PAGE 01 JAKART 00539 150750Z

17

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FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

TO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMCONSUL MEDAN

AMCONSUL SURABAYA

SECSTATE WASHDC 6088

C O N F I D E N T I A L JAKARTA 0539

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR ID MS SN RP ASEAN

SUBJ: ASEAN PARLIAMENTARY MEETING JANUARY 9-11

REF: A. JAKARTA A-111 6/10/74(NOTALAL)

B. JAKARTA 15158 C. STATE 6183

1. SUMMARY: REPRESENTATIVES OF PARLIAMENTARY BODIES OF FIVE ASEAN NATIONS MET IN JAKARTA JANUARY 9-11 TO DISCUSS "PARLIAMENTARY COOPERATION." AS EXPECTED, GIVEN WEAKNESS--OR IN CASE OF PHILIPPINES, NONEXISTENCE--OF PARLIAMENTS IN ASEAN NATIONS, MEETING WAS LARGELY CEREMONIAL. THERE WAS LITTLE OR NO SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSION ABOUT POSSIBLE MACHINERY FOR COOPERATION BETWEEN PARLIAMENTS, AND DELEGATES' STATEMENTS WERE LIMITED TO USUAL PLATITUDES ABOUT "SPIRIT OF ASEAN FREINDSHIP." IN OPENING REMARKS, PRESIDENT SUHARTO WARMLY PRASIED ASEAN COOPERATION, BUT NEVERTHELESS REFERRED TO ASEAN AS FLEDGLING ORGANIZATION AT THIS STAGE. IN USUAL FASHION OF SUCH ASEAN MEETINGS, DELEGATES AGREED TO MEET

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PAGE 02 JAKART 00539 150750Z

AGAIN IN 1975 (IN MALAYSIA) AND APPOINTED COMMITTEE

TO PREPARE PROPOSALS CONCERNING FORM WHICH A NEW ORGANIZATION FOR COOPERATION BETWEEN ASEAN PARLIAMENTS MIGHT TAKE AND SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION.. END SUMMARY

2. GOI, WHICH HAS BEEN MOST ACTIVE PROMOTER OF IDEA OF AN ASEAN PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION, REGARDS CONCEPT AS EXERCISE IN PUBLIC RELATIONS AND GOOD FELLOWSHIP DESIGNED TO SYMBOLIZE ASEAN FRATERNITY. INDONESAN PARLIAMENT IS LARGELY RUBBER STAMP FOR EXECUTIVE POLICY, AND GOI OBVIOUSLY DOES NOT VISUALIZE ASEAN PARLIAMENTARY GROUP AS FORUM FOR IMPORTANT DISCUSSION OF SUBSTANTIVE POLITICAL OR ECONOMIC ISSUES, ALTHOUGH INDONESIAN PARLIAMENT SPOKESMEN HAVE MENTIONED POSSIBILITY THAT ASEAN PARLIAMENTS MIGHT DISCUSS IN SUCH A FORUM MATTERS OF COMMON INTEREST SUCH AS TRADE AND EXTRECTION. GOI CERTAINLY DOES NOT ENVISAGE CREATION OF A SUPRANATIONAL "ASEAN PARLIAMENT."

3. GOI SLAOS SEES ASEAN PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION AS A MORE NON-ALIGNED ALTERNATIVE FORM OF REGIONAL PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION THAN ASEAN PARLIAMENTARY UNION, FROM WHICH IT WITHDREW IN MAY 1974. (REF A) THAILAND DELEGATE TOLD PRESS AT JAKARTA MEETING THAT THAILAND'S PARTICIPATION IN AN ASEAN PARLIAMENTARY FORUM WOULD NOT AFFECT CONTINUED THAI MEMBERSHIP IN APU.

4. IN WELCOMING ADDRESS TO CONFERENCE DELEGATES JANUARY 9, PRESIDENT SUHARTO SPOKE OF ASEAN BROTHERHOOD AND FRIENDSHIP AND IMPORTANCE OF ASEAN "DIALOGUES" SUCH AS PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE, BUT SAID NO MORE ABOUT CONCEPT OF PARLIAMENTARY COOPERATION. MAIN POINT OF SUHARTO'S SPEECH WAS TO STRIKE CAUTIOUS AND REALISTIC NOTE ABOUT ASEAN'S FUTURE FOR BENEFIT OF THOSE WHO EXPECT TOO MUCH TOO SOON FROM THE ORGANIZATION. HE SAID "LONGTERM" GOALS OF ASEAN WOULD NOT CONSIST MERELY OF PROMOTING ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL COOPERATION, BUT "WIDER COOPERATION WHICH WOULD ENABLE TO TRIVE FOR FUTURE PROGRESS AND PEACE IN OUR REGION." HOWEVER, SUCH COMMON COOPERATION

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PAGE 03 JAKARTA 00539 150750Z

WOULD TAKE "YEARS TO ACHIEVE" AND SKEPTICS WHO ARE "IMPATIENTLY" AWAITING "TANGIBLE RESULTS" FROM ASEAN SHOULD RECOGNIZE THERE ARE DIFFERENT ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CIRCUMSTANCES IN ASEAN COUNTRIES, CREATED IN PART BY COLONIALISM, WHICH CANNOT BE REMOVED OVERNIGHT. SUHARTO ADDED THAT FACT THAT ASEAN HAS BEEN CREATED AS "EMBRYO FOR NATIONAL COOPERATION" IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN "OUTWARD ACHIEVEMENTS SUCH AS VARIOUS KINDS OF

COOPERATION WHICH ARE GRADUALLY EXPANDING."

5. ONE AMUSING INCIDENT OF ASEAN PARLIAMENTARY
CONFERENCE, WHICH SEEMED TO SYMBOLIZE LACK OF ANY CLEAR
OR SERIOUS PURPOSE IN PROJECT, WAS FAILURE OF PHILIPPINES
DELEGATION TO APPEAR ON OPENING DAY OF CONFERENCE.
FILIPINO GROUP REPRESENTING "BARANGGAY COUNCIL"
FIQLLY STRAGGLED IN A DAY LATE AND JOINED FINAL
CEREMONIES, WHICH INCLUDED BAMBOO ORGAN CONCERT WITH
AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION IN FESTIVE ASEAN MOOD.
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